Members present: Embry, Hamm, Jamison, Messer, Miles, Stanley, Stephens, Werner.
Guest: Louesa Akin

Louesa Akin, the organizer for the Eco-House described this new housing opportunity and the projects currently planned. The location will be the 850 House (at the end of W.Walnut). This houses 11 students. Due to overseas study plans, there will be 13 different students living in Eco-House over the 11/12 academic year. Tentative plans include monitoring all utilities, comparison with available benchmarking data, “extreme” recycling, clothes lines, in-vessel composting, and educational outreach to the campus. Scott suggested there is a good opportunity for a bridge of cooperation between our Recycling Department and efforts of the Eco-House, to support, publicize, and promote recycling. Judy praised this step and expressed confidence that work of Eco-House will become an important positive example for all of our students to adopt a more sustainable lifestyle.

We returned to an earlier discussion on double-sided printing. This is very attractive step because of the obvious advantage of reducing printing costs and paper waste by half! There were conflicting understandings about default settings that are controlled by our IT department. Signage at shared printers was suggested. This deserves more attention.

Scott reported on the recently completed RecycleMania 2011. Centre ranked #102 of 363 participating institutions, recycling 15.46 pounds per person. This compares with #114 of 346 participants and 13.75 pounds per person in 2011. Scott’s perception is that RecycleMania gives us an opportunity to publicize and communicate the importance of recycling among all segments of the College.

As part of the campaign, Cheryl Coulter and the ECCO student group held a waste audit (or dumpster dive) to assess the opportunity for increased recycling. Their results showed about 30% of our solid waste could have been recycled. (In the 2010 measurement this was 40%.) This shows we have good opportunity for improvement.

Scott also reported a concern regarding the reliability of data for our solid waste management efforts. The monthly weight reports for recycling and solid waste are often not consistent with our expectations. Reports in recent months have been much lower. Scott is working closely with the recycling center staff to resolve the problem, but suggests we not rely “too closely” on their data.

Mike asked about policy decisions that could advance recycling. A formal campus-wide policy that is articulated to entering students and new employees is necessary to support any public information campaign. Behavioral change campaigns are most successful when voluntary participation is explained and encouraged.
Scott reported progress toward the Starting Gate Initiative. Earthwell representatives will complete the final on-campus inspection in the coming week. Auditing electricity and natural gas for 11 buildings or groups of buildings. The Earthwell report is anticipated by late-May. A final recommendation to the President is planned for June. Steve reminded us the objective is to develop reliable estimates for the capital investment that will be necessary for the most efficient mechanical systems. We are looking for the “big projects” and not the low hanging fruit.

Brent reported that Daniel Kirchner has received Humana Fund support for a spring event. The convocation will be a dialog between Marian Nestle (Food Politics) and Daphne Miller. Our committee was eager to collaborate with other events during the same week. In the fall a local foods banquet is planned by CentrePeace. Additionally, Professor Kirchner is interested in developing a pilot project with Sodexho to increase “protein & produce” that are sourced locally. Our opportunities are increased by a local USDA certified slaughterhouse and the success at other Sodexho colleges.

The discussion of Air Travel Mitigation Fund triggered discussion of surface travel and other college-sponsored travel. Some of the perspectives discussed were: i. the possible unfairness that international students are singled out; ii. the point that Study Abroad Committee initiated the now-volunteer policy; iii. other student activities including varsity sports travel; iv. the most comprehensive and maybe most equal approach would be to build a charge into the institutional budget; v. could a “check-off” be included in reimbursement forms directing funds to the mitigation account; vi. the rationale that a large fraction of students participate in some form of off-campus program, academic or athletic or other. Clearly, this is a matter for further discussion.

During discussion of plans for next year, Caroline suggested an umbrella Centre Sustainability Committee that was expanded to involve representatives of all of the relevant student organizations. Brent suggested that Daniel Kirchner would be an appropriate new faculty member. Steve suggested we consider developing sub-committees that could focus on specific dimensions of sustainability.

Miles Reports
1. Princeton Review, 2011 Guide to 311 Green Colleges. Centre was included in this publication, along with four other ACS schools, Rhodes, Sewanee, U. Richmond, & Furman.
2. PowerShift 2011. Four Centre undergraduates attended this event the weekend of April 16/17.
3. Air Travel Mitigation Fund. Project selected with student input was occupancy sensor lights. Scott has identified an inexpensive sensor device. Project planned for summer 2011.